

# Summer Shorts 2024

## Birth, Death and Somewhere in Between

Written & Directed by Kerry Bowden



## A Man's Best Friend

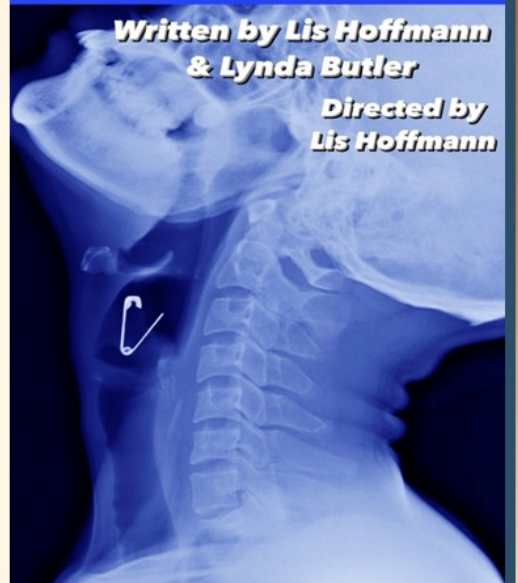
Written & Directed by  
Noel O'Neill



## CHOKING

Written by Lis Hoffmann  
& Lynda Butler

Directed by  
Lis Hoffmann



Three original one act plays by local playwrights.

**March 2024**

Melville Theatre at the Main Hall

# Summer Shorts 2024

## Production Coordinator and MTC President, Michelle Sharp

This time last year, after many meetings and years of planning, we finally got the news that the timeline was finalised and Melville Theatre Company was moving. It really is a fitting full circle as we return to the Main Hall at Melville Civic Centre, the place our founder David Burton started the Company in 40 years ago. I'm sure he will be looking down at us with a smile to-night.

When looking at the type of show to choose for our premier season the word that kept resonating was local. Local playwrights, local directors, local cast and crew, and I'm proud to be able to bring these three original plays together to do just that.

The performances you will see in *Summer Shorts* are a testament to the talent, but also the hard work of our Directors, Cast & Crew in not only bringing these plays from paper to the stage, but rehearsing them in the midst of moving everything we need from one venue to another, negotiating new systems, learning new equipment and generally finding our way around our new home.

We welcome you to enjoy this amazing new theatre and we hope to see you back for many years to come.

## Crew

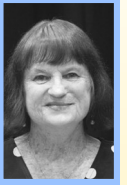
Production Coordinator	Michelle Sharp
Stage Manager	James Gant
ASM	Beth Pleasants
Crew	Drew Morgan or Emily Lyons
Overall Lighting Design	Lars Jensen
Technical Operator	Eva Hill
Tech Assistant	Luke Oxely
Costumes	Supplied by cast
<i>For Choking</i>	
Lighting Design	Jasmine Lifford
Sound Design	Lars Jensen
Costumes	Merri Ford
Props	Laura Mercer
Poster and Program	Vanessa Jensen
Front of House Coordinator	Julia Calvert
FOH, Box Office and Bar	MTC members

# The Plays

## **Birth, Death and Somewhere in Between**

Written and Directed by Kerry Bowden

Cast: Nick Stevenson



The storyline of *Birth, Death and Somewhere in Between* is progressed by using the dramatic form of monologue writing. It is a form I deliberately chose as I believe monologues provide characters with a deeper opportunity to articulate their emotions, inner thoughts and their humanity. I wanted the setting spare and pared back so that each character's voice was the main focus for the audience rather than a decorative setting. I also wanted the back-stage elements of the play to be deprivatised, with any costume or prop change to be performed in front of the audience.

Performing a series of monologues of numerous characters with different ages, gender and personalities is often a challenging task for any performer. For sole actor, Nick Stevenson, inhabiting each character uniquely and authentically, before nimbly taking on the life of another character, has ensured seamless transitions between storylines.

We hope audiences enjoy both the levity and sometimes sadder moments of the human condition portrayed in the play.

Special thanks to Michelle Sharp and committee members who have worked tirelessly to have Melville Theatre Company's beautiful new performance space ready to house *Summer Shorts*.

**INTERVAL—20 minutes, the bar will be open.**

## **A Man's Best Friend**

Written and Directed by Noel O'Neill

Cast: GEORGE Michael Dornan  
BETTY Mona Afshar



A man is obsessed with his dog and it puts his relationship in jeopardy as he tries to convince his partner that she means as much to him as his dog. This leads to a huge conflict between them.

The series of park bench plays came about as I was sitting on a park bench in Central Park in New York City. I noticed different "happenings" on each park bench.

A couple looked like they were having an affair another looked like they were breaking up etc. So I just allowed my imagination to take flight and one park bench story led to another.

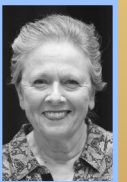
So far I've written about twenty and people seem to enjoy them as opposed to a whole play as if they sat down and read short stories instead of a whole novel.

The set is really easy, as is the lighting so it's an easy task all round. The difficult part is for the actors as their actions are in their words while they sit on the bench.

## **Choking**

Written by Lis Hoffmann and Lynda Butler  
Directed by Lis Hoffmann

Cast: PAUL Phil Bedworth  
TIM Hugh McGuire  
NATASHA Sharon Menzies  
AARON Charlie Young  
MARION Natalie Louise  
MURRAY Phil Barnett  
DOTTIE Lis Hoffmann



**Pride Parade and Hotel Guests: Leonie Strickland, Tarryn Allum, Decaris Matic, Samantha Martin and Julia Webster.**

I wrote *Choking* with the Co-Director of Stella Theatre Company and longtime writing partner Lynda Butler. She was playing around with one of her roleplay characters and we started riffing about his story and *Choking* suddenly sprung into life. Our first great surprise was Melville Theatre Company giving us the green light on a synopsis. I reckon that takes guts. Thank you Melville Theatre Company and Kayti Murphy for your support.

We wrote the first draft, I cast it and then had the incredible luxury of workshopping it with the actors. I also wrote another character in after the auditions to include an actor who had impressed me. Their generous input was an incredible help. Every director raves about their actors but the team on this project was just so creative and flexible.

*Choking* is set in a hotel 'Retreat on The Esplanade' where Tim and Paul work on the front desk. We set out to tell one man's story but other characters presented themselves to us along the way and we eventually created a bigger world.

The second great surprise was the response to my advertisement for volunteers to take part in a Parade as part of the play. I held an acting workshop for them and they excelled themselves. Each one has made their own very personal contribution to the story.

Thank you all so much.

MELVILLE ●●●  
**THEATRE**  
COMPANY

AT THE MAIN HALL

Melville Civic Centre  
Entry off Davy St, Booragoon

MELVILLE ●●●  
**THEATRE**  
COMPANY

A bittersweet and moving Australian drama where  
six disparate characters collide and connect on the  
open road.

# Sweet Road

By Debra Oswald

Directed by Vanessa Jensen

*10th to 25th May 2024*

With permission of the author through Cameron's Management

Melville Theatre at The Main Hall  
Melville Civic Centre  
10 Almondbury Rd, Booragoon (entry off Davy St)

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